

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A method for Forward Error Correction decoding a signal which has become affected by transmission errors, the original signal being transmitted together with parity data (ECC DATA), the method comprising:
  - receiving (5) the original signal (DATA) and parity data (ECC DATA) with errors;
  - checking (6) for integrity thereof; and
  - counting and locating the errors (7),
 characterized in that the method further comprises:
  - setting at least one error threshold;
  - comparing (11) the number of counted errors with the set threshold; and
  - performing the correction (8) only in case the number of counted errors is lower than the threshold.
2. A method according to claim 1, wherein, in case the number of counted errors is higher than the threshold, the correction is performed in a different step if a recursive decoder is used.
3. A method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the step of setting an error threshold comprises the step of setting a first error threshold for checking lines and a second error threshold for checking columns.
4. A method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the step of setting an error threshold comprises the step of setting a different error threshold for any of the correction iterations.
5. A Forward Error Correction decoder for decoding a signal which has become affected by transmission errors, the original signal being transmitted together with parity data, the decoder comprising:
  - a receiver for receiving the original signal and parity data with errors;
  - a checker for checking for integrity thereof; and
  - a counter for counting and locating the errors,
 wherein the decoder further comprises:
  - a comparator for comparing the number of counted errors with a error threshold, the correction being performed only in case the number of counted errors is lower than the threshold.
6. A decoder according to claim 5, wherein the error threshold

comprises a first error threshold to be used for checking lines and a second error threshold to be used for checking columns.

7. A decoder according to claim 5, wherein the error threshold comprises a different error threshold for any of the correction iterations.